

Statement on Diversity and Inclusion

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January 2022

Everyone benefits when a diversity of perspectives is represented. This precept has permeated my work and personal life.

On June 2, 2003, I published an article entitled "Diverse Perspectives Create Prosperous Results" in the *Printing News*. I wrote: "...I am personally proud to be associated with institutions that value and promote diversity in the academic workplace. As a white male, it might seem as though I would have something to lose by advocating this viewpoint. However, by promoting diversity, institutions strive to create an environment where creative thinking and creative problem solving abound, and I am frequently the beneficiary of these decisions."

While supporting institutional diversity initiatives is essential, this effort alone is insufficient for the classroom and workplace. For example, individuals may fear retribution for dissenting viewpoints. As a leader, it is my responsibility to engage with individuals from varied backgrounds in a spirit of collegiality and respect. This engagement shows respect for the backgrounds and cultures of these individuals and enriches my life as I continually learn while making new friends. In that same 2003 article, I wrote: "It is also my responsibility to ensure that my classroom is an environment where fear of retribution for ideas is driven out." My efforts here include learning about important cultural and religious holidays and even memorizing phrases in different languages. My whiteboard office calendar consists of these holidays each month. I pro-actively message students away from home near these events and make sure that they are connected to local resources and have the technologies to connect with loved ones from their homes.

It comes down to respect, and these efforts bear fruit organizationally and for me as the nuances of diverse cultures and practices are profoundly interesting.

Further, it is the responsibility of leaders to adopt a proactive perspective of cultural humility. This approach is consistent with a commitment to continual improvement. In 2021, I earned the cultural humility certificate from the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at Rochester Institute of Technology. This certificate is the result of the completion of several courses offered by that Office. I look forward to more classes in Diversity and Inclusion in 2022. As a result of my participation here, I have written to elected leaders to support legislation to assist underrepresented and historically oppressed communities. I have also been inspired to attend lectures and read research and opinions that I may have overlooked before attending these courses, which have enabled me to grow in these critical areas.

In summary, the work at cultural humility is ongoing and lifelong. Providing classrooms and a workplace where diversity is respected, and individuals are honored is foundational to this vital work. Such environments are consistent with my values and aspirations.